

**TESTIMONY OF ADMIRAL ROBERT J. PAPP, JR.  
COMMANDANT, U.S. COAST GUARD**

**“USCG FY 2014 BUDGET”**

**BEFORE THE  
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOMELAND  
SECURITY**

**April 16, 2013**

Chairman Carter, Ranking Member Price, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, it is my honor to appear before you today to testify regarding the Coast Guard’s Fiscal Year 2014 Budget.

I would like to divert from my prepared remarks today to say the collective hearts of our Coast Guard Family go out to the people of Boston, and all families affected by yesterday’s tragedy. The Coast Guard is based in that community – and we were able to respond immediately with boats and crews from Sector Boston, Maritime Safety and Security Team Boston, an armed helicopter, vessel boarding teams and overall enhancement of the maritime transportation security posture. Our ability to respond like this in our ports is a direct result of the support we have received from the Administration and Congress over the past 12 years.

That support also enabled our responses this past year.

During Hurricane Sandy, we rescued 14 crewmembers from HMS BOUNTY in 30-foot seas and 60-knot winds eighty miles offshore. In the Port of New York and New Jersey, our Marine Transportation Recovery Unit surveyed channels, evaluated waterfront facilities, restored the aids to navigation system, and worked across government and industry to reopen the port to commerce.

To meet growing demands in the Arctic, we completed Operation Arctic Shield, a 9-month interagency effort including the deployment of a National Security Cutter, two light ice capable buoy tenders, and two helicopters 300 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Given the lack of shore infrastructure and extreme conditions, the capabilities provided by our National Security Cutter were critical.

In executing the DHS layered security strategy, the Coast Guard detected and interdicted threats as far from our shores as possible. Targeting Central American coastal trafficking routes, our cutters and aircraft teamed with interagency aircraft to detect and interdict drug-smuggling vessels carrying 107 metric tons of cocaine – with a street value of nearly \$15 billion, and we disrupted transnational criminal organizations.

Closer to shore, we responded to the growing threat of small go-fast vessels that smugglers are using to avoid the increased security along the southwest U.S. border. Drug smuggling, human trafficking, and other illicit maritime activity – continues to threaten our Nation. Those engaged in this trade are growing smarter and bolder, and they are an increasing danger to our homeland.

In December, I presided at the memorial service for Senior Chief Boatswains Mate Terrell Horne III of Coast Guard Cutter Halibut. He was killed by smugglers when they rammed his Coast Guard pursuit boat near San Diego. Our commitment to the Nation and our duty to honor the memory of Senior Chief Horne strengthens our resolve to defeat these threats.

Unfortunately, much like the weather and the seas we face on a daily basis, the Coast Guard cannot control the fiscal environment in which we operate. We will make best use the resources you provide to safely and effectively conduct operations in the areas of greatest risk to the nation, while recapitalizing our cutters, boats and aircraft to address current and emerging threats, particularly in the offshore environment. The FY2014 President's Budget request does just that.

This past year we made great strides in recapitalizing the Coast Guard's aging fleet.

In October we will christen the fourth National Security Cutter, HAMILTON. To date, we have taken delivery of 5 Fast Response Cutters and 14 HC-144 aircraft. We also contracted for the ninth HC-130J, completed a mid-life availability on our Patrol Boats, and are nearly complete with a mid-life availability on our Medium Endurance Cutters at the Coast Guard Yard.

Despite these successes, we have a long way to go to recapitalize the Coast Guard with the ships, boats and aircraft the Nation needs. The Capital Investment Plan should inform this discussion, and I look forward to delivering it very soon.

As the Department of Defense rebalances forces to the Pacific, and maritime activity increases in the Arctic, offshore demand for Coast Guard capabilities and authorities is increasing. Our 378-ft High Endurance Cutters have ably served offshore for 50 years, but as I have testified before, they are at the end of their service lives. I am very happy to report that I received strong support from the Secretary and the President on my highest acquisition priorities, including funding for the 7<sup>th</sup> National Security Cutter in the FY2014 budget.

The FY 2014 budget sustains the most critical front-line operations while funding our most critical acquisition projects. In the current fiscal environment, this required tough decisions informed by my highest priorities. These were difficult decisions for me and for our Service – but they were the best decisions to ensure we provide the next generation of Coast Guardsmen the tools required to protect our nation.

As I look back on our successes of the past year, I have never been more convinced about the value your Coast Guard provides to the Nation, and I have never been prouder of our Coast Guard men and women.

Our missions ensure adherence to a system of rules and sustain the mechanisms designed to provide for the security, safety and prosperity of all who use the maritime domain. This is the daily work of government that provides us with both order and opportunity on the oceans. What we provide is maritime governance.

While realistic and mindful of the current fiscal environment, I remain optimistic about the future of the Coast Guard. It is my duty to look beyond the annual budget cycle to prepare and adapt the Service, and keep it moving forward to address the greatest maritime safety and security risks to the nation now *and* in the future. The men and women of the Coast Guard give their all and make sacrifices every day, putting their country first. We owe them our very best efforts to provide the support they need.

This Subcommittee has long supported the men and women of the Coast Guard, recognizing their sacrifice, and on behalf of my Coast Guard Shipmates, I thank you.

I look forward to answering your questions.